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# Trail of Tears

STATE FOREST



# CONSERVATION

## LOCATION

Trail of Tears State Forest is located in scenic Union County, 5 miles northwest of Jonesboro, Illinois and 20 miles south of Carbondale, Illinois. The area is readily accessible by Route 127 on the east side of the Forest and Route 3 on the west.

## FOREST PURPOSE

The Forest was originally established to demonstrate and encourage proper Forest Management for the private forest land owner. The Forest was also established to improve and sustain the Forest resources and protect the natural qualities of the Forest including the watershed. Thirdly the Forest was established and is maintained to provide integrated multiple use of the various Forest recreation opportunities available at the Site. The State Forest will serve to demonstrate to the small forest land owner the total benefits that can be obtained from their management.

## THE TERRAIN

Trail of Tears lies within the beautiful Shawnee Hill Country of Southern Illinois. Generally the terrain presents a very rugged appearance with long, narrow ridges approximately 150 to 200 feet in height, falling away sharply on either side. The slopes are steep and the valleys between them are narrow. Secondary valleys ranging from the bottoms of the slopes to within a few feet of the tops, break the continuity of the main slopes. Approximately 90% of the area is in mature hardwood forests.

## HISTORY

**Cherokee Indians:** Between mid-December 1838, and early March 1839, 10,000 Cherokee Indians were forced to move 800 miles from the Great Smokies area to a reservation in present-day Oklahoma. The exiled Cherokees had to stop in southern Illinois just south of what is now Trail of Tears State Forest because of floating ice in the Mississippi River.

Makeshift camps provided poor shelter against the unusually severe winter weather and many people died, thus giving the area the name "Trail of Tears."



**Purchased by the State:** Trail of Tears State Forest was originally known as the Turkey Farm. It was consolidated into the Kohn-Jackson forest and was purchased by the Department of Conservation in 1929. At that time the Forest (then named Union State Forest) contained 3,228 acres and has since been increased to 5,114 acres.

A Civilian Conservation Corps Camps was located on the Forest during the thirties. Much of the stonework within the picnic area and several log shelters were built with their efforts and remain in their original condition. In addition a Prisoner of War Camp was also headquartered at the State Forest during World War II.

## THE TREE NURSERY

Approximately 120 acres of the Forest are devoted to the operations of the Union State Tree Nursery. Ten (10) acres are devoted to intensive management of nursery stock and this acreage produces 3 Million seedlings annually. Tree plantations also exist within this Nursery amounting to seventy (70) acres. Their purpose is to provide seed for the Nursery from improved species which were planted in the plantations, and also to allow some experimentation to be done.

## TIMBER MANAGEMENT

238 Continuous Forest Inventory Plots are scattered throughout the Forest which are utilized in gathering data which is used to formulate the timber management plan. The latest methods of computerization are used to digest this data and present figures on volume, growth, and species for the total forest by compartment. The Forest is divided into 27 compartments and each of these can be evaluated as an individual unit.

Nearly all species of trees in Southern Illinois are found at Trail of Tears. A small percentage of the Forest has been planted to the non-native shortleaf, loblolly, and white pine. These pine plantings are being taken over by invading native hardwoods and will gradually disappear through the process of succession.

The Forest is protected by fire by aerial patrols by the U.S. Forest Service during dry weather. The fire trail system within the Forest provides quick access to all parts of the Forest.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Picnicking:** Picnicking is the major recreational use of the area. Two main picnic areas are available containing two large and two small shelters complete with tables, camp stoves, fireplaces, privies, etc. Drinking water is available at various places within the picnic area. The site also has one ball diamond. 4 picnic shelters with fireplace are located in remote locations in the Forest for a unique picnicking opportunity.

**Trails:** The network of fire trails and horse trails in excess of 45 miles is excellent for hiking, backpacking and horseback riding. These trails also provide access for the hunter.

**Camping:** Class D camping is available at the Site at 4 locations. At each location a log picnic shelter with a fireplace and privies are available. A group camping area is also available.

**Hunting:** Squirrels, deer, turkey, and raccoon are all available for hunting within the Forest. 1/5 acre water holes and 40 small wildlife openings have been constructed to improve the habitat for these game species. Hunters are asked to sign in and report their harvest at hunter sign in boxes located in the area.

**Unique Features:** The 222 acre Ozark Hill Nature Preserve is located within the Forest. The stone wall drainage system and log picnic shelters with fireplaces constructed by the CCC are also a unique feature of the area.

For further information concerning the State Forest contact the Site Superintendent by writing Trail of Tears State Forest, R.R. 1, Box 1331 Jonesboro, IL 62952 or by calling 618/833-4910.

For information on other sites, write the Illinois Department of Conservation, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, Illinois 62706.



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- Property Boundaries - - - - -
- Trails .....
- Gravel Road - - - - -
- Shelter



SCALE 1/2  
One Mile  
CONTOUR INTERVALS 20 FEET  
Map Data Base January 1981

Class D Camping  
Areas and Picnic  
Areas

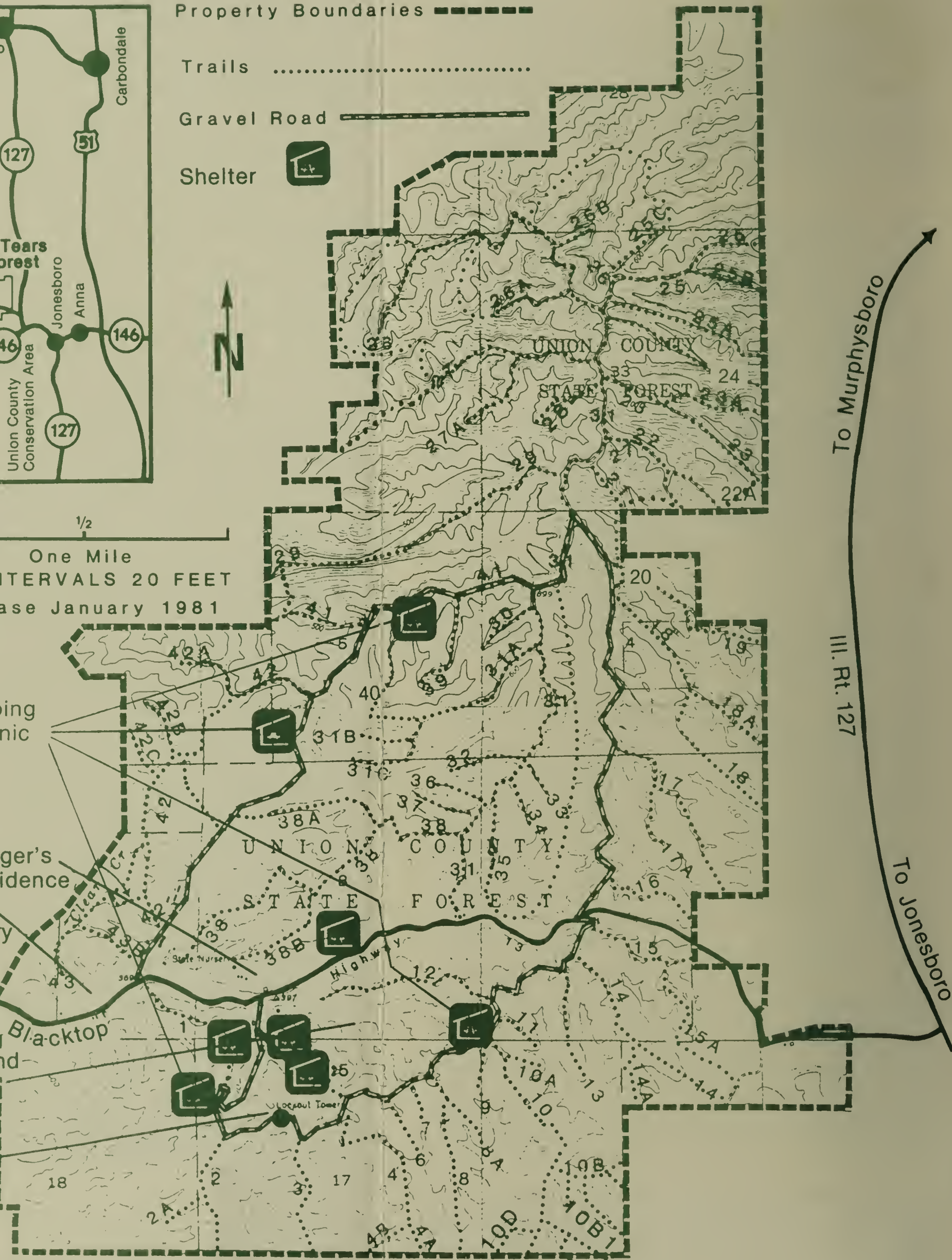
Ranger's  
Residence

Tree  
Nursery

To Wolf Lake  
County

Picnic Area and  
Ball Diamond

Observation  
Tower



To Murphysboro  
To Jonesboro  
Ill. Rt. 127